

The Machinery for Economic Planning : II. The National Economic Development Council

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I am very glad that the Royal Institute of Public Administration has decided to hold this series of lectures. The machinery of government is a phrase with which we have all been familiar from student days. It carries with it the ideas and assumptions which have traditionally characterized the Civil Service and public administration generally in Britain. The machinery of planning is a phrase with very different antecedents and less settled connotations. Planning has been discussed and analysed by politicians, economists and administrators since the launching of the first five year plan in the U.S.S.R. thirty years ago. Since then the concept of planning has had its ups and downs. This is not the place to go over the various stages as a result of which public opinion has accepted the idea of economic planning. Here it is sufficient to say that the search for new concepts of economic policy applicable to the realities of a new economic and technical structure has led to the setting up of a complex planning mechanism in this country.

The way in which this acceptance has come about illustrates the peculiar manner in which we tend to stumble forward into new initiatives. The objections to planning in the years after the war were directed less at its objectives than at the machinery by which it was carried out. Everyone wanted an end to war-time shortages, and to see a growing economy and expanded social services. But those who had endured the disciplines of rationing throughout the war years and after were not prepared to go on submitting indefinitely to a system based on controls. The dismantling of controls around the end of the 1940's ushered in a decade in which planning tended in the public mind to be associated with war scarcities and with an elaborate restrictive administrative apparatus for fitting demand to supply.

But the weaknesses inherent in the British economy remained to be dealt with whether the means by which this was done went under the name of planning or not. The traditional framework of analysis of means and ends – developed it is true far beyond ‘the saving of candle ends’ – still worked reasonably effectively over a wide range of government activities.

But throughout the 1950's it became increasingly clear that the variations on a Keynesian theme that dominated economic policy were not providing a complete answer. The increasing complexity of the problems of keeping the economy moving smoothly forward was proving beyond the powers of the existing machinery. The Keynesian approach led to a fuller use of our resources and avoided the wastes of grave unemployment, but it was not conceived in terms of a dynamic growth programme which is the key characteristic of the new economic thinking and is at the heart of the planning development.

An analysis of what was happening in the British economy and a comparison with the ways in which the same kind of problems were being dealt with abroad showed clearly that new approaches to economic policy were needed at governmental, industrial and administrative levels. This involved a re-thinking of the content of economic policy, and of the roles of the public and private sectors and their relationship to economic policy objectives. At the administrative level ways had to be found of bringing industry into policy making and of giving departments a wider appreciation of the problems facing industry.

The N.E.D.C., which was set up at the beginning of 1962, was just such a venture in administration as well as planning. In the course of my remarks I shall explain how it came to be set up and how it has operated. Then I shall deal with the content of the planning work so far and describe the types of policies needed to secure the growth objective. Finally, I shall attempt to draw the threads together and place the planning operation in a wider perspective.

PLANNING ABROAD

But first may I put this discussion of our national planning process into context by stating the perhaps obvious fact that the United Kingdom is not by any means the only country in the free world which has developed new machinery for economic planning.

One variant or another of national economic planning has been adopted in the majority of countries throughout the world. It is common to developed as well as underdeveloped countries. In western Europe alone, some fourteen countries now have forward plans. These vary from the French planning arrangements which have some important similarities to the way planning is developing in the United Kingdom to systems wholly outside the government machine. In the French case, a great deal of the work of preparing a National Plan is undertaken by a branch of the Treasury. Industrial consultation is organized through industry committees established by the *Commissariat du Plan*, which is essentially a government body. But the machinery for consultation with management and with unions is rather less intimately integrated with the preparation of

the Plan at the national level, though parliamentary consultation is more highly developed. Also, in France, the industry committees do not have the direct and continuing concern for improved economic performance that the E.D.C.s¹ have in the United Kingdom.

At the other extreme, there is the Swedish arrangement where the Plan is prepared by an office entirely independent of the Government. The Government itself has no commitment to the Plan, but uses the sketch prepared by independent experts of future developments on a national and industrial scale as a valuable assessment in market research and as focusing attention on problems of policy which need to be tackled if the objectives set out by the experts are to be realized.

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

In the case of the United Kingdom, the first announcement of a new approach to planning was made in Parliament by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Selwyn Lloyd) in July 1961. From the first, the concepts of growth and planning were inter-related. The Chancellor's opening statement plunged straight in with the words: 'I will deal first with growth in the economy. The controversial matter of planning at once arises . . .'.² In the subsequent debate, he referred to the work of the existing bodies whose function it was to advise the Government, e.g. the Economic Planning Board within the Treasury, the National Production Advisory Council for Industry (N.P.A.C.I.) and various other councils, and said 'I want something more purposeful than that. I envisage a joint examination of the economic prospects of the country stretching five or more years into the future. It would cover the growth of national production and distribution of our resources between the main uses, consumption, government expenditure, investment, and so on. Above all, it would try to establish what are the essential conditions for realizing potential growth. . . . I want both sides of industry to share with the Government the task of relating plans to the resources likely to be available'.³

There followed approaches by the Government to the employers' organizations and the T.U.C. While the T.U.C. had considerable reservations about the Government's economic policy generally, they supported the concept of an effective development in the field of forward planning and agreed to join the proposed National Economic Development Council, 'having taken note of the Chancellor's assurances that the N.E.D.C. would be consulted before the Government form its policy on economic issues and that it (the Council) would be competent to initiate discussions and to make recommendations on any subject'.

¹Economic Development Committees familiarly known as little Neddies.

²H. Deb., 25 July 1961.

³H. Deb., 25 July 1961.

The Federation of British Industries (F.B.I.) and the British Employers' Confederation (B.E.C.) also supported the formation of the Council. They welcomed the new approach to planning as being closely in line with the suggestions that had emerged from the group which had considered this matter at the F.B.I. Conference at Brighton in November 1960 on 'The Next Five Years'.

While the T.U.C. members of the Council regarded it as important that they should be representative of the T.U.C., the employer members who were appointed were not representative of the various employer bodies. This was partly because of the number of different national bodies then in existence. There is also an important question of whether discussion is limited if members speak in a representative capacity. One can see inherent here a possible difference of view between the value of having a body of individuals whose views might go well beyond opinions currently acceptable to national bodies, and, on the other hand, the value of knowing that members of the Council spoke with a real sense of the responsibilities they carried in national organizations.

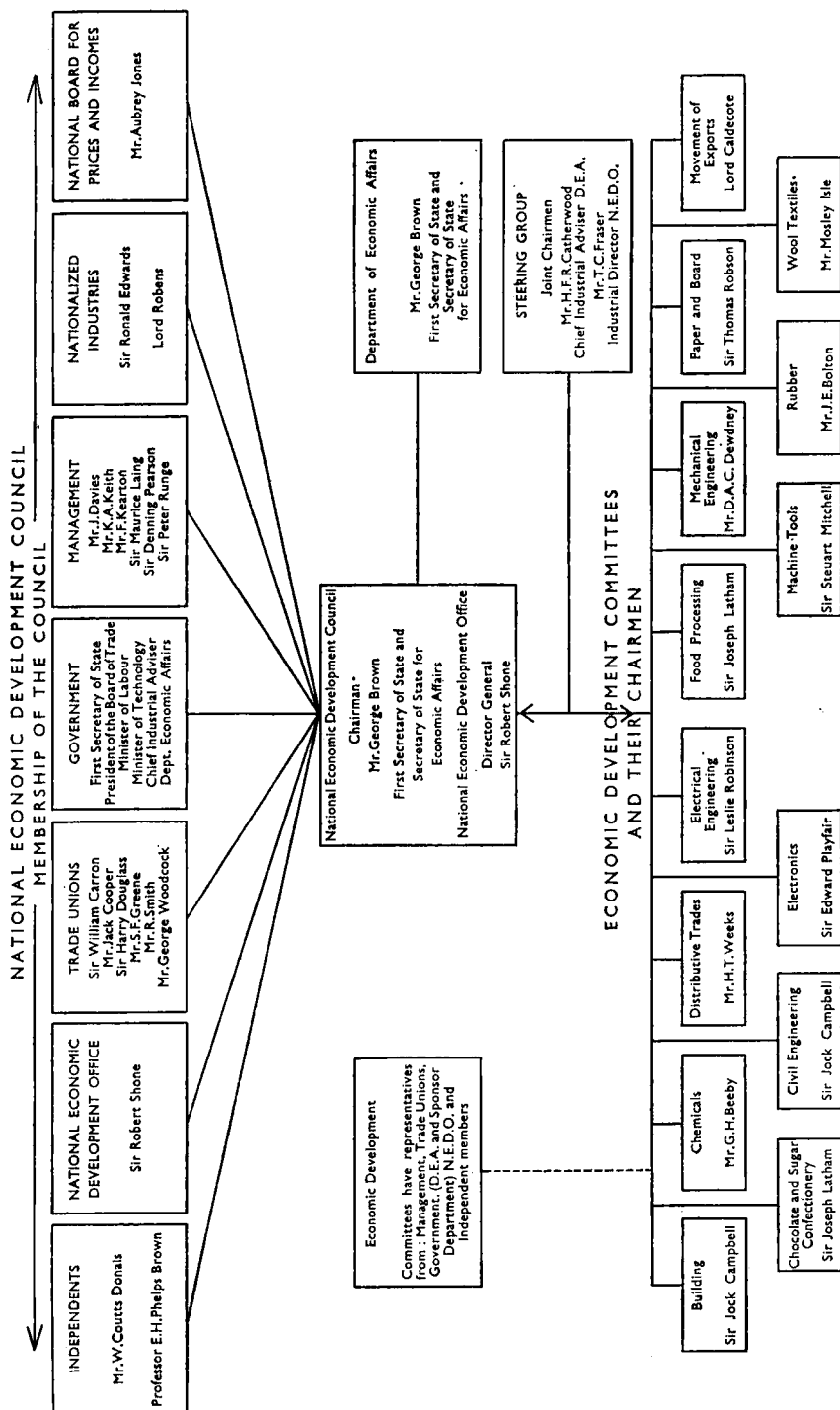
The Council started in 1962 with the Chancellor of the Exchequer as Chairman and a membership of two other Cabinet Ministers (the President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Labour), six T.U.C. representatives, six employers, two nationalized board chairmen, two independent members and myself. It remained in this form until shortly after the General Election of 1964 when a number of changes occurred, some of them following on the expiry of the initial period of appointment of members. Among the significant changes were that the First Secretary of State and Minister of Economic Affairs became Chairman instead of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; the Minister of Technology joined the Council; the representation on the management side became formally representative of the Confederation of British Industry¹ and a member from the City was included. After the establishment of the National Board for Prices and Incomes, its Chairman joined the Council.²

The terms of reference of the Council were to seek agreement on ways of improving economic performance in the United Kingdom; this was defined as 'to increase the rate of sound growth'. To this end, the Council were, first, to have particular concern for plans for the future in both the private and public sector of industry, and second, to seek ways of overcoming the obstacles to quicker growth. These terms of reference were not altered with the change of Government in October 1964. The Council had initially interpreted its remit regarding future plans in terms of arranging for the preparation by its own staff of a report on the development of the economy to 1966. When in 1964 the new Government itself

¹The new employers' association created by the amalgamation of the Federation of British Industries, the British Employers' Confederation and the National Association of British Manufacturers.

²The full membership of the Council is shown in the organization chart.

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Note: Sir Jock Campbell is now Lord Campbell and Mr. F. Kearton is now Sir Frank Kearton.

undertook the major responsibility of preparing a forward plan, the consultation and involvement of the Council in the planning operation was still covered by the original terms of reference. How then did the Council set about its two-fold task relating, specifically, to future plans and, more generally, to faster growth? What changes were involved with the change of Government in October 1964? And what have been the results?

From the beginning an independent, small but high level staff was an essential part of the N.E.D.C. concept. While discussions regarding the formation of the Council were proceeding, the Chancellor had already made it clear that he envisaged there would be established a full-time staff under a Director from outside the Civil Service. Members of the staff would be drawn in part from the Civil Service and in part from industry and elsewhere. Individual members of the staff would normally be regarded as on temporary secondment for two to three years.

The staff has indeed been built up from many sources – some from industry, some with trade union backgrounds, some from the universities and some from the Civil Service. From the first, they were organized in two main divisions, economic and industrial, initially each about the same size, with a secretariat and a small technical department.

The concept of a staff drawn from these different sources has remained, but since the General Election there has been a considerable change in the balance of the work of the Office and of the staff employed. When the new Government took office, much of the economic staff of the Office was transferred to form an important part of the planning staff at the Department of Economic Affairs. Some staff were also transferred to the Ministry of Technology.

Against this, the Office has since the election been expanding its industrial work with the development of the E.D.C.s. Staff problems in an organization such as this are complex, partly because the principle of secondment or short-term engagement is a difficult basis on which to run a permanent organization. There are also demands from many other bodies, including the Government, for staff of the qualifications we need. It is interesting to note that during the Office's existence it has transferred to government departments about as many staff at professional level as it has received in secondment from the Government. The total staff in all, at present, is 110 and is expanding with the growth of the E.D.C.s.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

It would be appropriate here to say a word about the Economic Development Committees which form an important part of both the planning and efficiency aspects of our work.

The extensions of the industrial side of the Office reflect the increasing scale of the consultations going on with industry. In 1963, it was decided

to form Economic Development Committees having the same broad structure as the Council with representatives of management, trade unions and the relevant government departments sitting together with members of the N.E.D. Office. Their general objectives reflect those of the Council itself, that is to examine the performance, prospects and plans of the individual industries concerned, assess their progress in relation to the national objectives and consider ways of improving competitiveness and efficiency. Nine E.D.C.s had been formed by the time the Department of Economic Affairs was established. A further five Committees have been set up since then.¹ A major part of distribution and industry is already covered, and steps are being taken to extend the structure further. Since the election, government representation on the E.D.C.s has been increased by including on them industrial advisers from the Department of Economic Affairs. A senior member of the N.E.D. Office sits as a full member of each E.D.C., and the secretary of each is provided by the Office. Working relations between government departments and the committees are co-ordinated under a steering committee of which the Chief Industrial Adviser of the D.E.A. and the Industrial Director of the Office are joint chairmen.

The E.D.C.s are important as a new instrument in policy making quite distinct from other advisory and consultative committees. They represent, as does the Council, a coming together of representatives of trades unions, management and government in a context very different from their usual encounters. The members, because of the positions they hold, have considerable influence over the organized channels of communication in their industries. This influence is particularly important when it is brought to bear on attitudes and practices which are recognized to be holding back progress. In addition to the members who are representative, there is a strong independent element in the chairman, a small number of independent members and the N.E.D. Office representation.

I need hardly stress the importance of these bodies. Consultation and involvement of industry is essential if a National Plan is to have a real chance of influencing attitudes in particular firms and industries. To put it at its minimum, the planning operation is a valuable way of getting industry to consider developments in relation to the growth of the economy over a period of at least five years ahead. But since the achievement of better performance depends on more efficient use of manpower and capital, on better export performance and on other matters to which private industry has a major contribution to make it is of great value in achieving these objectives if industry can be effectively involved. The work of preparing estimates in practical quantitative terms on matters such as the

¹Economic Development Committees have subsequently been set up for the Newspaper, Printing and Publishing industry and the Post Office. Agreement has been reached for the establishment of E.D.C.s for Hotel and Catering; Clothing; Hosiery and Knitwear; and for Agriculture.

expected productivity improvement is of importance not only in providing basic data for the Plan but in focusing the directions in which action is needed. The importance of this function is demonstrated by the fact that the check-list in the National Plan requires the E.D.C.s to take action on a vast range of problems concerned with the competitive strength of their industry.

THE PLANNING MECHANISM

To come back to the Council's involvement in the planning function, its first concern, whether the Plan is being prepared in its own Office or by the D.E.A., is to consider the various rates of growth at which it might be reasonable to aim.

I have been concerned as Director-General with two such operations. The 1966 Plan was drawn up by the N.E.D. Office and after approval by the Council was published as *Growth of the United Kingdom Economy to 1966*. The 1970 National Plan was prepared by the D.E.A. in collaboration with the N.E.D.C. and the Office. There were similarities and differences in the two procedures. Both in the case of the N.E.D.C.'s first plan and of the 1970 National Plan, the material before the Council regarding possible growth rates in the period ahead was in somewhat similar form. It included a consideration of the trends in growth of manpower and productivity in this country and in other industrial countries and of factors which might influence these trends. This led to the choice of a provisional growth rate.

Both the 1966 and 1970 Plans were drawn up by consulting industries, or in some cases individual firms, on their expectations in relation to the provisional growth objective, arranging for inter-industry consultation on the estimates, and then incorporating them with the public sector estimates in a draft Plan. The development of the E.D.C. structure from 1964 onwards enabled industrial estimates for the second Plan to be made over a substantially wider field and for them to be endorsed by the committees.

In the case of public expenditure, different procedures were followed for the 1966 and 1970 Plans. Assessments for the first Plan were made by the N.E.D. Office after consultation with nationalized industries and in the light of government statements about defence, social services and related policies in force at the time the 1966 Plan was prepared. Great help was provided to the N.E.D.C. staff in drawing up the estimates, but the Government did not regard itself as specifically providing assessments. They were, in the first instance, the Office's own appraisal of expected developments, with some important modifications subsequently made in the light of the Council's discussions.

When the main work of preparing the Plan was taken over by the D.E.A. a more elaborate machinery for co-ordinating government estimates was worked out. It is not easy to judge how far the Government commitment

to forward assessments will in practice be affected by the alteration of the way in which they are prepared. In 1963, the Chancellor of the Exchequer formulated his Budget proposals in terms of the 4 per cent. growth objective, and, on 1 March 1963, in answer to a parliamentary question, a Treasury Minister stated that in total the public expenditure figures in the 1966 Plan did 'not appear inconsistent with the rate implicit in present Government policy'. The 1970 Plan states that the public sector programmes 'are not irrevocable four or five years ahead, but are subject to revision in the light of changing circumstances' (para. 5.3). Even with this important qualification, the 1970 Plan undoubtedly involves a significantly greater degree of government commitment to the public sector estimates.

I will say no more about the process of constructing a Plan except to add that, whether this work is done by the N.E.D. Office or by government departments, or by a collaboration of both, the prime function of the Council is to consider whether, looking at the draft Plan as a whole, it is reasonable, whether its objectives can be supported and whether the policies designed to secure the objectives are appropriate. If the Council considers further developments of policy are needed to secure the improved performance aimed at, then it has a duty to contribute to the formulation of such policies.

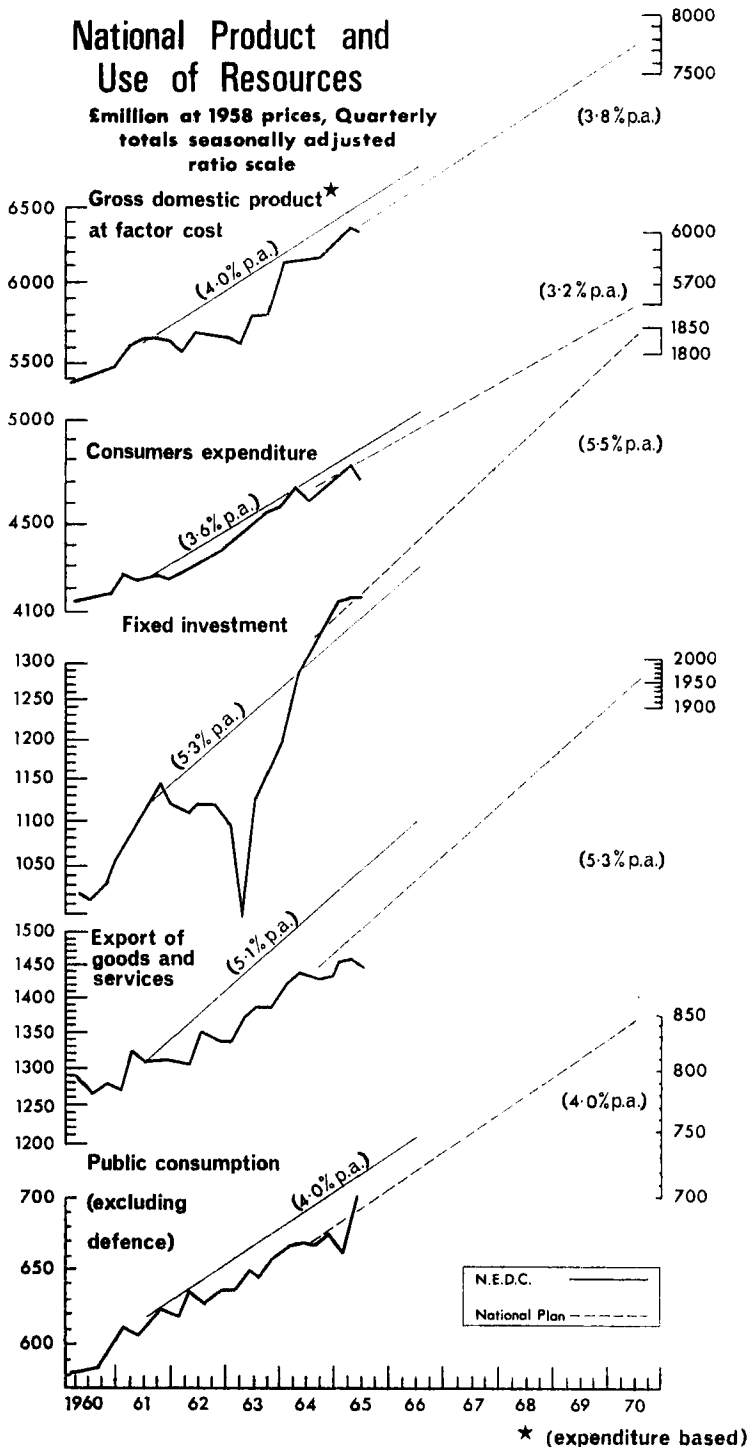
CONTENT OF PLANS

I propose now to make a few observations on the content of the 1966 and the 1970 Plans; first on the main dimensions of the Plans and second, on the policies designed to secure the changes needed to achieve the growth objectives. This, I think, will help in assessing the appropriateness of the machinery established.

On the content of the two Plans, the most striking feature is the similarity in broad dimensions and in much of the detail. There is indeed an important element of continuity running through the two Plans, though perhaps Dr. Jeremy Bray in *Socialist Commentary* for November 1965 goes too far in saying that 'spokesmen have only been able to claim originality for the National Plan because no one seems to have read the N.E.D.C. Plan for 1966. The argument is the same, the language, even many of the chapter headings'. What is clear is that the central element in both Plans is a closely related assessment of the increase in productivity which can be obtained over the two periods. In the 1966 Plan the average productivity increase aimed at was 3.2 per cent. per annum and in the 1970 Plan it is 3.4 per cent.—the rate actually achieved in the six years to 1960 was 2.4 per cent. The underlying productivity trend has been increasing, and in both cases the figure aimed at is almost $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. above the underlying productivity rate at the beginning of the two planning periods. The two Plans thus represent to a very similar extent a challenge to improve

National Product and Use of Resources

£million at 1958 prices, Quarterly totals seasonally adjusted ratio scale



efficiency by an amount which is not strikingly out of line with previous achievement yet is sufficiently high to present a real challenge.

The total growth rate aimed at in the 1970 Plan of 3.8 per cent. per annum is lower than the previous 4 per cent. This is a reflection of the slower growth in the working force in the latter part of the decade. The slightly slower total growth in the second Plan is thus combined with a further stepping up of the productivity aim.

Many other features of the two Plans are broadly similar. However, one major difference is in defence expenditure. In the second, defence expenditure is not expected to rise in real terms whereas in the earlier Plan it was expected to increase by 3 per cent. per annum. The saving on defence in the 1970 Plan means that that Plan is able to aim at rates of increase in exports and investment slightly higher than in the first Plan, even though the overall growth rate is a little lower. The growth of exports aimed at in the second Plan is 5.3 per cent. per annum, slightly higher than the 5.1 per cent. aimed at in the first Plan.

The substance of these points on the two Plans is to show a degree of continuity in the quantitative aims embodied in them. The broad changes are a moderate stepping up of the already challenging objectives of productivity and export growth, with some easing of the defence claim on resources. The crucial issue for the future is the extent to which policies are developed to ensure the realization of the objectives.

POLICIES FOR GROWTH

From its inception and indeed its terms of reference, the N.E.D.C. have always recognized that a Plan aiming at better economic performance must be supported by policies designed to ensure that the faster growth aimed at is realized. The need for policies to support the Plan is even more imperative in the United Kingdom than for a number of other countries since in Britain the essence of the forward Plans has been a desire to change the pace of growth. In other countries such as Sweden the existing growth rate has been satisfactory and the Plan has been much more an exercise in national market research, with a commentary on policies designed fundamentally to maintain the satisfactory rate of growth already in existence.

A point much in the mind of the N.E.D.C. in their first consideration of policies for growth was that the time-scale of many key policies is necessarily very different from the time-scale of a particular five-year Plan. For example, a major part of growth comes from investment in man in the form of education; the benefits here are often long delayed.

The time factor was certainly one of the considerations which led the Council to issue its original publication on policies for growth¹ as a separate volume from the Green Book on the Plan for 1966.

¹*Conditions Favourable to Faster Growth*, H.M.S.O., 1963.

Another issue with which the Council has been concerned is how frequently to review any statement of policies for growth. It is feasible and desirable to review the quantitative elements in a forward Plan year by year. This was undertaken in respect of the 1966 Plan by a reappraisal of the objectives and a report on progress a year after the Plan was issued. An alternative basis of review would be the 'rolling' forward approach with new objectives set each year for five years or so ahead. Whichever method is chosen, such an annual review is more difficult in relation to policies for growth. This was particularly apparent when many of the policies in the original N.E.D.C. report involved important changes which would inevitably take some time to be brought into operation. If closer examination confirmed their value they were nearly all likely to take several years to become operative. The Council therefore followed up its original general work on policies by concentrating attention on particular facets of the policies, rather than on reviewing policies as a whole. It concentrated, for example, on examining the progress in management training, in work on investment incentives and in relation to the policies relevant to particular industries. The possibility of issuing another general report on policies for growth was overtaken by the Election and the concentration of effort on the new 1970 Plan.

This is not the occasion to review in any detail the main strands of policy which the Council has advocated in support of successive Plans for faster growth. However, it may be convenient to group the approach under three broad headings.

First, growth policies are based on an increase in the quantity or quality of resources; second, they are based on making better use of the resources through a smoother and more efficient working of the economic system; and third, they are based on the development of attitudes which are favourable to the achievement of agreed objectives.¹

On the first point, the prospects of growth in this decade depend largely on the increase which has been progressively taking place in the post-war years in the proportion of the national product devoted to investment (this had risen to about 19 per cent. by 1961 compared with some 14 per cent. before the war); and on the further increase over the two Plans. Equally on the manpower side it depends on the increase which has already taken place in the resources devoted to education and training of all sorts, including research efforts, and again the further expansion of the effort during the period of the Plans.

It seemed likely when the first Plan was issued, and this in my view applies also to the 1970 Plan, that at least a major part of the faster growth rate aimed at could be secured from the increased productivity resulting from higher investment in human as well as physical resources.

The second major way in which policy changes have been seen by the

¹For a fuller discussion, see my 'Problems of Planning for Economic Growth in a Mixed Economy', *Economic Journal*, March 1965.

Council as needed for growth is in making the economic system work in a way which makes better use of the resources available. Examples of these are to ensure the better use of the potentialities of the less developed areas, proposals to encourage the flexibility of manpower by unemployment pay more closely related to earnings, measures to widen the basis of training and to encourage the introduction of new labour-saving equipment. Fiscal and pricing policies, particularly those designed to bring into closer alignment private and social costs, are also highly relevant.

In a sense, making the best use of our resources can be expressed in terms of making the market work better. In this field the policies of the planners often coincide with policies advocated by critics of planning. It would be quite wrong to suppose that there is a conflict between planning and the objective of securing an efficiently operating market. The latter is of vital importance. It is only because market considerations themselves are not sufficient to deal with all the problems in the modern economy, particularly those of time and scale, that planning and the use of the market have to be integrated to secure the best results.

The third area of policy developments lies in finding ways of changing attitudes. This involves a recognition by groups in the economy that their welfare is to an important extent dependent on the welfare of the economy as a whole. This I believe to be the heart of the prices and incomes policy. An important development here was the change, in the course of discussions in the Council during the early part of 1964, in the attitudes of management to prices. It was recognized by the Council that responsible behaviour in relation to incomes could not be achieved unless management also recognized that one of the key elements in the determination of prices must be price and cost action favourable to the economy as a whole. I was interested to see that this view was reaffirmed by Mr. John Davies, the Director-General of the C.B.I. in a letter to *The Times* on 5 November 1965. But it is not only in the field of prices and incomes that new attitudes are sought. Involved in all the work of the Economic Development Committees is a new and broader approach to the problems of industry.

The policies and changes in attitudes recommended by the Council, or suggested for further examination, have included many controversial items which involved a break with previous views expressed by either the Government, management or unions. Many of these have been published and have already had an important and obvious impact on the shaping of new policies.

CONCLUSIONS

In this talk I have attempted to describe the role of the N.E.D.C. since its formation, the ways in which this has evolved and the changes which took place when the new Government came into office last year. I should like

now to draw the threads together and set the machinery of planning in the wider perspective. The fact that N.E.D.C. was set up by one Government and has continued under its successor raises points of continuity and of difference. There has been continuity in the broad dimensions of the 1966 and 1970 Plans. Both started from an assessment of the increase in productivity which could be obtained over the period covered. Both represented a challenge to improve industrial efficiency. The points of difference were on the degree of responsibility accepted by the Government for the preparation of the Plan and the extent to which its proposals were regarded as definite policy commitments.

In the present arrangements, the National Plan is a statement of government policy which is presented to Parliament and becomes the basis for action by all the departments involved in its implementation. This change in the function of the Plan has inevitably affected its contents.

So far as N.E.D.C. is concerned, one major development has been the greatly increased emphasis on the E.D.C.s as a method of carrying forward modernization and change in industry. The high proportion of the N.E.D. Office engaged in this work is an indication of the administrative impact of the change.

But the emphasis on the industrial work and on the machinery of little Neddies in no sense means that the N.E.D.C. can no longer inject ideas into the planning discussion and propose measures that will improve our economic performance, including measures which fall outside the scope of the Plan. I believe that for this reason alone it is vitally important that there should be an organization to which government and industry are committed but which is not part of the main Whitehall machine; and which has the authority and prestige to ensure that new ideas find their way on to the agenda. Because of its unique composition and purpose, the contribution which the Council has to make is also unique and it is different from that which a government department can make.

The transition to a new Government has created changes in the nature and function of the Council itself. An important outward sign of this change has been on the management side where the C.B.I. is formally represented. The activity of the Council from its inception as a catalyst in bringing together the different functions and activities of management was, I believe, one factor in producing the fusion of the major associations and organizations representing the interests of management. The trades union members of the Council, as has been said earlier, sat from the first as representatives of the T.U.C. with the right to report back to their members. Their participation in N.E.D.C. has been part of the closer involvement of the trade union movement in the central economic issues of the day.

The Council as a whole then has, in a way that was not the case at its formation, increased its general representational character. This new situation has meant gains but also some risks. The advantages are clear but

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we must always be careful to see that the present more representative nature of the Council does not lead to excessive caution. There must always be room for examination of new and even controversial policy issues by the Council. It is perhaps a little harder to do this when one is sitting with an awareness of responsibilities in great national organizations than if one is there simply as an individual. At the same time, it is right to attach great weight to the value of common endorsement of policies by the Council, particularly when new developments of policy are involved. The two approaches are not incompatible. The objects must always be to combine responsible involvement in policies with a readiness to look imaginatively and constructively at new possibilities.